Course description

What is deviance? What is “normal”? Who is the deviant? Who defines deviance? Why do people conform to social rules? Why and how do institutions of social control emerge? Why are some forms of behaviour come to be socially defined as deviant while others are not? What are the distinctions between crime and deviance? This course introduces students to the sociological study of deviance and social control, distinguishing it as a field of research from biological, psychological and “clinical” explanations of deviance. It will trace the historical development of theories on sociology of deviance and chart their relevance to understanding contemporary forms of crime and deviance. These perspectives will be utilized and illustrated through a study of the changing patterns of defining and controlling deviance in modern societies.

Prerequisite
Nil

Topics to be covered:

- Problematizing crime, deviance and social control
- Deviance as rational hedonism or sickness? The classical and pathological perspectives on deviance
- Emile Durkheim and the birth of Sociology of Deviance
- Anomie theory: strain, inequality and deviant aspirations
- Gangs and subcultures
- Labelling and the work of moral entrepreneurs: Moral panics and urban legends
- Capitalism as criminogenic: Marxian perspectives on crime
- Ethical and methodological issues in the study of deviance and crime
Field Trips

There will be a total of 2 local field trips in this module (spread over two weeks). All three trips will take place during the lecture hours. Free transportation to and from the venue will be provided. There is likelihood that one might be a self-paid (about $20 each student) trip pending confirmation. Details of the field trips will be given at a later date once these visits are confirmed but it is likely that students will be visiting a Halfway House for recovering drug addicts, courts/prisons, and a ‘hotspot’ of deviance.

General Texts

Research Periodicals
Social Problems, Berkeley: University of California Press. HN1 SP
*Videos for Viewing

Lecture Topics

1. Problematizing Deviance, Crime and Social Control

Downes and Rock, Chapter 1 & 2

2. Deviance as Rational Hedonism or Sickness? The Classical and Pathological Perspectives on Deviance

3. Durkheimian Theory: Functionalism, Deviance and Control

Downes and Rock. Chapter 4.


4. Anomie Theory: Normlessness, Inequality and Deviant Aspirations

Downes and Rock. Chapter 5.


5. Subcultural Theory of Deviance


6. Social Reaction Perspective: Labelling and the Work of Moral Entrepreneurs

Downes and Rock, Chapter 7.

7. Toward a Marxian Theory of Deviance and Crime

Downes and Rock. Chapter 10.

9. Ethical Issues in the Study of Deviance / Review Lecture

See Special Issue on ‘Methodological Dilemmas of Research’ of The British Journal of Criminology, Vol. 41, No. 3. 2001 (Consult journal in library)

Grading Components:

1. Critique paper 20%
2. Writing an opinion piece on the legalization of drugs 20%
3. Field trip reports 30%
4. Test 30%

More details will be given on each of the grading components at a later date. Ample guidance will be given to the students.

There is no exam for this module since it is offered under the FASStrack Asia summer school in Special term

Deadlines for the submissions: TBA